

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT
November 12, 2003

ITEM: 19

SUBJECT: Status Report: Framework of Grant Funded Water Quality and Beneficial Use Protection Programs—A Case Study Example from the City of Laguna Niguel, Orange County (*David Gibson*).

PURPOSE: A status report regarding the framework of federal Clean Water Act section 319(h) Non Point Source Pollution and state bond act (Proposition 13, 40 and 50) grant programs including a summary of a case study from Laguna Niguel, Orange County.

PUBLIC NOTICE: None required.

DISCUSSION: Prior to 2000, grant funding for water quality protection and improvement projects were limited to federal Clean Water Act 319(h) and 205(j) grant programs. Annual funding available statewide under these grant programs was generally less than 10 million dollars. Since 2000, California voters approved bond acts (Propositions 13, 40, and 50) that authorized the State to sell approximately 8 billion dollars in general obligation bonds. Some of these funds are made available through competitive grants through the State Water Resources Control Board and Regional Boards. The first two rounds of competitive Proposition 13 grants were awarded in 2001 and 2002. The third phase, worth approximately 61 million dollars, is currently underway (Supporting Document 1). The Regional Board is reviewing 14 projects valued at approximately 23 million dollars (Supporting Document 2). The State Board is expected to consider a resolution to award the grants in February 2004

While there are now a number of federal and state grant programs that provide financial support for watershed and water quality projects, these funding sources usually have varying objectives, requirements, and eligibility standards. Project proponents and their partners must refine their projects to fit with the specifications of a funding program. Moreover, these projects are also shaped and directed in part by local watershed and other management plans, the San Diego Region Basin Plan and Watershed Management Initiative Chapter, and the California Non Point

Source Pollution Control Plan. Thus, project proponents must frequently develop proposals over several years and iterations.

The Regional Board assists project proponents and their partners by identifying funding sources and providing technical support in the development and refinement of project ideas and formal proposals. For Proposition 13 and federal 319(h) grant funded projects, the Regional Board Grants and Projects Assistance Unit performs an oversight role in managing the contracts. Presently, there are 32 projects worth approximately 19.6 million dollars in the San Diego Region funded through the Proposition 13 and federal 319(h) grant programs (Supporting Document 3).

Case Study Example from Laguna Niguel, Orange County

The Wetland Capture and Treatment (WetCAT) project implemented in the City of Laguna Niguel provides an excellent case study of a Proposition 13 funded project in the San Diego Region. Ms. Nancy Palmer, Senior Watershed Manager, will describe the project and water quality improvements of the project for the Aliso Creek watershed (Supporting Document 4).

Water quality monitoring, in the Aliso Creek watershed between 1998 and 2000 identified fecal coliform bacteria, nutrients, and manganese concentrations in urban runoff from the JO3PO2 storm water conveyance into Sulphur Creek in exceedance of water quality objectives of the San Diego Basin Plan. The Regional Board issued Clean Up and Abatement Order No. 99-211 to the City of Laguna Niguel and the County of Orange in December 1999 requiring the bacterial contamination to be cleaned up and abated. Wildlife and domestic pet waste, organic soil amendments, turf-grass maintenance activities, and organic debris in gutters and storm drain systems were identified as most probably sources of the pollutants. The City of Laguna Niguel proposed a project to complete the retrofitting of a low flow capture and constructed wetland treatment system that would parallel the high low JO3PO2 storm drain system throughout the subwatershed. The project was designed to capture all dry weather, low-flow runoff and route it through a set of three wetlands constructed for multi-purpose treatment (Supporting Documents 5 and 6). The wetlands have been successful in reducing the concentrations of pollutants in runoff in the JO3PO2 subwatershed. Each of the three wetlands release water that meets the REC-1 standards most of the time, despite seasonal high-bacteria inputs.

LEGAL CONCERNS: None

**SUPPORTING
DOCUMENTS:**

1. Updated Summary of 2003 Consolidated Watershed Protection and Non-Point Source Request for Proposals
2. 2003 Consolidated Watershed Protection and Non-Point Source Pollution Control Grants, San Diego Region Proposals.
3. Status of Proposition 13, Federal 319(h) and 205(j) Funded Contracts and Projects.
4. City of Laguna Niguel Wetland Capture and Treatment (WetCAT) Presentation.
5. Wetland Capture and Treatment (WetCAT) Network, City of Laguna Niguel.
6. Wetland Capture and Treatment (WetCAT) Network - North Wetland Plan View.

RECOMMENDATION(S): None.